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C.I.A. Isn't Lone Wolf of Foreign Policy

To the Editor:

"The C.I.A.: Time for an Overhaul" (editorial, Feb. 1) is inaccurate and contains four major distortions:

(1) The Central Intelligence Agency has never assumed the "right to meddle in other nations' internal affairs." The charter legislation for the C.I.A. makes it the instrument for such special activities, but only when they are proposed by the policy agencies, directed by the President and financed by Congress after proper notification. Such activities are a coordinated, carefully considered element of United States foreign policy, not the whimsical activities of the C.I.A. Moreover, every President since 1947, and every Congress, has found such activities to be necessary in the conduct of foreign policy.

(2) You assert that our assessments and analytical products are politicized. That is true neither historically nor today. At least 18 times last year your reporters came to us for objective analysis; they sought and received agency background briefings on the major substantive issues of our times: proliferation, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Somalia. Moreover, your reporters and others consistently tell us that the C.I.A. is one place where they can get information and analysis that is clearly free from policy influence.

(3) The C.I.A. is in the forefront of Government agencies whose programs, finances and practices are subject to scrutiny by Congress — and it operates rigorously in accord with the rules and requirements established by Congress. Last year the C.I.A. sent more than 50,000 documents to Capitol Hill covering the full range of national security issues. We testify regularly (more than 1,200 times in 1992) about the substance of our work, the details of our activities and the expenditure of every dollar. Our budget is proposed by the President and, although classified, is reviewed, authorized and appropriated in the same way as other agencies' budgets. Congress has appointed several committees to review our work regularly and in great detail.

(4) For years the agency has sought and received outside expert commentary on its analytical work — at its inception, as it is developed and as it reaches final form. For example, many leading outside experts agreed with our characterization of the Soviet economy over many years, espe-

cially on the trends, where we still claim our greatest accuracy. Even those who disagreed could offer no better methodology by which to track trends over decades.

There will surely be a debate on the future role of the C.I.A. and United States intelligence. I hope readers will find these facts helpful as discussions unfold.

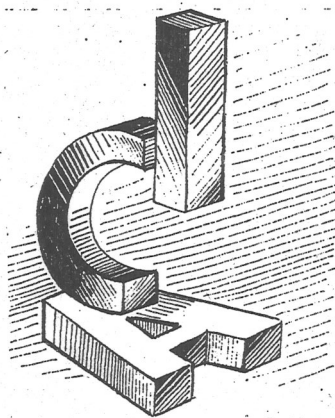
GARY E. FOSTER
Dir., Public and Agency Information
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, Feb. 10, 1993

Archives Need Airing

To the Editor:

"The C.I.A.: Time for an Overhaul" (editorial, Feb. 1) asserts that opening the Central Intelligence Agency to public inspection "begins with the budget." A new openness permitting public and Congressional assessment of the agency's proper role in foreign policy must also begin in its archives.

All of the major historical associations have gone on record warning that the omission of C.I.A. records from the official historical compilation of 30-year or older documents,



David Suter

known as "Foreign Relations of the United States," opens the United States to the charge of falsification of history. (This charge was forcefully made by many historians against the recently released volumes related to United States relations with Iran and Guatemala in the mid-1950's.) How can an informed evaluation of the agency be made when it tightly restricts access to its own history?

The former Director of Central Intelligence, Robert Gates, took a giant step toward openness when he established an office to deal with declassi-

fication. So far this office has worked largely on materials related to John F. Kennedy's assassination. The agency has assured historical organizations that declassification of documents on Iran and Guatemala in the mid-1950's will be the next priority.

R. James Woolsey, the new director, has a historic opportunity to endorse and facilitate open inquiry at home. The C.I.A. should build on Mr. Gates's promises and implement systematic declassification of old records. Congress and the public should insist that the post-cold-war restructuring include a process that allows us to examine and learn from our past.

EMILY S. ROSENBERG
St. Paul, Feb. 9, 1993

The writer, a professor of history at Macalester College, is a member of the State Department's Historical Advisory Committee.

A Diminished Role?

To the Editor:

Re "The C.I.A.: Time for an Overhaul" (editorial, Feb. 1):

I am disappointed you did not mention the proposals for restructuring United States intelligence introduced by Senator David Boren and Representative Dave McCurdy a year ago. These proposals go to the heart of the issues you raise and are a thoughtful working paper for change and budget reduction.

They outline the means for reducing the cost and redundancy of high-tech intelligence collection. They propose replacing the Director of Central Intelligence with a director of national intelligence to oversee all intelligence operations, achieving a diminished role for the Central Intelligence Agency by making it responsible only for clandestine services.

The analytical function, responsible for the production of national intelligence and for tasking, would be performed by a new national intelligence center, separate from covert operations and designed to inform policy, not make it. These proposals go a long way to reducing the cost of intelligence and to cleaning up its act.

The Bush Administration balked at this legislation; let us hope President Clinton will take a second look and seize the opportunity for intelligence reform.

CHARLES D. AMERINGER
University Park, Pa., Feb. 3, 1993

The writer, a professor of history at Penn State University, is the author of "U.S. Foreign Intelligence."